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THE Quakers Plea,

ANSWERING ALL

OBIECTIONS,

And they proved to be no way dangerous, but

FRIENDS

TO THE

KING:

And may be tollerated in their

RELIGION,

with safety to the

Kingdom.

P. H.

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Whereas it is objected at this day by many, that the *Quakers* (so called) are a dangerous People towards the King and his Goverment, and therefore not fit to be tollerated, as they say, upon these Reasons.

First, *Because many of them have been in the Army against the King and Kingly Authority* (as it is said) *under the commands of the late usurped Powers of Protectors, Parliaments*, &c.

Secondly, *Because they will not swear, nor take the Oath of Allegeance to the King, nor give any credible assurance by Oath or Promise, or other security that they will be peaceable, and not fight, nor take up Arms against the King*, &c.

Thirdly, *Because they are a People not conformable to the Church, and not agreeing with the customs and fashions of the Kingdom, but are singular in their wayes, and keeps a correspondency among themselves, holding great Meetings, and thereby may seduce many more of the Kings Subjects to their wayes and Principles.*

To all these I Answer in order.

THe first Reason, *Because many of them* (viz. the Quakers) *have been in the Army against the King and Kingly Authority, under the Commands of the late usurped Powers of Protectors and Parliaments*, &c.

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Answ. 1. Though it is acknowledged that some who are now called *Quakers* have been in the Army under the Protectors (so called) and their Parliaments, that warred against the King, yet it is not true of all of us, for some that are now *Quakers* (so called) were in the Army for the King, and also many of us were never in any Army, neither for nor against him; so that the strength of this reason is avoided, because we have not all in general been in Arms against the King, and therefore now not a dangerous people on that Reason, because the strength and force of the Reason is fetched from that cause in General, which all of us are not guilty of, and so now not a dangerous people (in General) on that account, though some have been in Arms at some time as aforesaid, under the Powers against the King; neither is it an infallible sign, or certain reason of a dangerous Person, or People towards the King, to have been sometime in the Army under the late Powers against Him, because some that are now the Kings nearest Friends, and Pillers of the Government, and no whit dangerous to him, have that sign upon them, and are fully concluded under that reason of once being in the Army against the King.

But Secondly, Though some that are now called *Quakers* were once in the Army, under the Powers against the King, when their knowledge and judgments were not otherwise framed, but were of that Principle and Practice, that fighting and going to war in it self was lawful, *&c.* Yet being now altered and turned in their judgements to the contrary, and that it is not lawful (in the Administration of the Gospel) to fight against, or go to war with

with Carnal Weapons in any wise, there is now no danger of us on the former account, because the fear of present danger now concerning us, cannot rightly be placed on that reason (of what) we once were, being now changed in our Principles in that case, and cannot now fight, or go to War with carnal Weapons against the King, nor any man upon the earth; and this being now our Principle in that case (notwithstanding whatsoever it hath been heretofore) we cannot justly now be concluded to be a dangerous People to the King, because such of us (whose Principles) were once so, are changed even from that Principle and practise of going to wars, and fighting, and now are all of that mind and heart, that in the administration of the Gospel, it is on all occasions whatsoever unlawful to go to war, and fight with any man with carnal Weapons, contrary to the Doctrine of Christ. But

Thirdly, It cannot justly be judged concerning us that we are a dangerous people, as we are Quakers for that cause and reason which we might be, or do when we were not such, so that we cannot now be reputed a dangerous people, as we are truly so, and called Quakers, upon that reason alleadged against us of what we were, or might do when we were not Quakers, because we are now (as such) turned from that Principle of fighting, and as Quakers, never any of us took up Arms against the King, and therefore as we are Quakers, cannot be justly judged dangerous nor condemned, neither feared as such, seeing that (as such) and ever since we were such, we never took up arms against the King; nor gave just cause of suspition of being dangerous to the King and his Goverment, and we

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927 cannot justly suffer in any case now for what we might be, or do before we were such, for now we hold the principle, and practise also of living peaceable with all men, and not to fight against, or war with any; and if any proceedings be against us now in any cases, it is only as we are such, and not as we were such in another capacity.

2. Reas. *Because they* (viz. *the Quakers*) *will not swear, nor take the Oath of Allegiance to the King, nor give any credible assurance by Oath or promise, or other security that they will be peaceable and not fight, nor take up armes against the King*, &c.

Ans. First, Though we will not swear, nor take the oath of Allegiance to the King, it is not because we will not take that oath, but because we cannot take any oath at all; For we cannot swear at all, because of the command of Christ, who hath expresly forbidden to swear at all, *Mat.* 5. So though we will not swear Allegiance, yet that is no good reason that we are a dangerous people, for our refusing to take the oath of Allegiance is not out of Rebellion to the King, or as though we had some reserve of future intents of Rebellion, or conspiracy towards him, and would not therefore swear Allegiance, but would leave our selves free to intend, or act evil to him, but it is out of good conscience, and that we may keep the commands of Christ, therefore only do we refuse to swear in that, and all other cases, and so no true consequence can be collected that we are a dangerous people on that reason, neither is it a certain reason and infallible sign that a people is dangerous towards the King for denying to take the oath of Allegiance, because many people that will swear, and take that oath,

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are ſtill accounted dangerous, and may be truly ſo accounted, and may not be wholly friends to the King and his Government, though they have taken that oath; ſo we cannot be truly judged to be more the Kings enemies, nor leſs his friends, though we will not ſwear Allegiance, ſeeing it is not denied of Rebellion, but for conſcience ſake.

Secondly, We are ready and willing to give a credible Teſtimony in the fear of God, that we ſhall not Rebel, Plot, or imagine to the hurt or diſtruction of the King his perſon, or juſt Authority in the verity of yea and nay, as God is our witneſs, or we ſpeak the truth in Chriſt and lie not, ſuch credible teſtimony (which is as binding to us to be performed of us, then any formall oaths are to them that take them,) we have given and are ready to give for our ſecurity of peaceable living, and that we ſhall not Plot nor Rebel againſt the King, but live peaceably, &c. And ſuch our Teſtimony in yea, and nay given ſolemnly by us, as God is our witneſs, or we ſpeak in his fear, &c. is as credible ſecurity, as any oaths, promiſes and engagements of any others, and will be performed as truly and perfectly; But

Thirdly, No better teſtimony can be given of us of our peaceableneſs, and that we ſhall not Plot, nor Rebel againſt the King then experience it ſelf, experience I ſay is the ſufficient and beſt witneſſe, that we are peaceable, and free from Plotting and Rebellion, for we have alwaies been ſo ſince we were a people, both before and ſince the King came in, and never ſince that we were a people have we taken the occaſion (though often profered us) to war with, or fight againſt any by Riſing up with car-

carnal weapons; but have ever been subject (according to a good conscience) to every Authority that have been over us, and we are so clear, and free in these matters, that we can challenge the whole world to accuse us, or detect us of the contrary; so our refusing to swear or engage our selves by oath in Allegiance to the King, argues not any danger at all towards him, or as if we were a dangerous people and not to be tollerated, because we are ready to give testimony of our peaceable living, & also experience witnesseth that we are a peaceable people, and have alwayes been so, and we are ready to testifie in the presence of God, that we are (resolved in the Lord) so to continue.

3. *Reas.* Thirdly, *Because they are a people not conformable to the Church, and not agreeing with the customes and fashions of the Kingdome, but are singular in their wayes, and keeps a correspondency amongst themselves, holding great meetings, and thereby may seduce many more of the Kings Subjects to their wayes, and principles,* &c.

Ans. First, it is true, we are not conformable to the Church of *England*, nor agreeing to the customes and formalities of the Nation in many things, yet this argues no danger at all in us, for it is not out of perverseness, malice, or evil-mindedness that we do not conform to the Church, but for conscience sake, and for conscience sake we cannot conform in many things, as in particular may be shewed if it were the present case to be resolved, and tis our desire to dispute the Case with the Fathers of the Church, and being tis not of malice, nor evil mindedness towards the King and his Government, that we do not conform to the Church,

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and Cuſtomes of the Land, but wholly and only for Conſcience ſake, and that we may keep our conſcience clear, and not ſin againſt our God, therefore no ſound reaſon of Danger concerning us can be drawn or alleadged againſt us, becauſe of our not conforming to the Church, neither is conforming to the Church a certain and infallible ſign of a perſon, or a people to conclude that they are not dangerous towards the King, becauſe many that do or may conform, may (more truly then we) admit of ſuſpitious danger, and this is very true; Wherefore our not conforming to the Church, renders us not to be accounted a dangerous people, becauſe many that may conform to the Church, may be dangerous more then we.

Secondly, but as for not agreeing with the cuſtomes and manners of the General ſort of people of the Land, this is much of the ſame with the former, and the ſame anſwer may be given; for though it is true that we do not agree in many cuſtomes, and formall faſhions and manners of the generall ſort of people, this is alſo for conſcience ſake, and leſt we ſhould ſin againſt God, this is the only cauſe wherefore we refuſe to follow, and are departed from many of the cuſtomes and faſhions, and manners of this world, being moſt of them in the vaine glory, and ſuperſtitions, and flatteries, ambitions and deceits of this evil world, and all ſuch cuſtomes, faſhions and manners as are vain glories, flatteries and deceits, we agree not with any in theſe things, but are ſeparate from them, and oppoſite to them, and that for good conſcience ſake; yet this argues no danger at all, as though we were a dangerous

people to the King, and his Government, upon this reason, for this shews no danger at all, because we do not contemptuously nor rebelliously separate our selves from the people, into division or singularity in this case, but only for good conscience sake, as being convinced of the evil of these things, and that they are not good, therefore we deny, and separate from them; and also this is no certain reason, nor infallible charracter that we are a dangerous people, for many that do conform to all the customes, and manners, and wayes of men are not excluded from suspition of danger; but even some such as do conform both to the Church, and all customes and manners of the Land, may be a more dangerous people then we are; so this reason shews not truly that we are such as is objected against us, (to wit) a dangerous people, and not fit to be tollerated.

Thirdly, as for being singular in our wayes, and holding correspondency one with another; thus it is, we are such as do fear the Lord, and are separated from this evil world in all its wayes, and vanities, and are only singular so, and not otherwise, as that we cannot joyn with, nor conform unto any thing in word, work, or action, which is contrary to the Scriptures of truth, and to the exercise of our pure consciences; But so are we singular, as that we love the Lord our God above all, and delights to serve him in a pure heart, and we follow after truth and righteousness, mercy and peace, the good of our neighbours, and the glory of the Lord, and the contrary we hate, and are separated from, into singularity and separation, and we love one another, and

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are united in the bond of peace, and are members of one body (to wit Christ) and are of one heart, and one soul, even as it was among the Primitive Christians, so it is amongst us all this day in respect of our union and correspondency, for no other we hold then they, even in the truth, and in the power of God, and only such is our union, and fellowship; and this correspondency is no reason of danger on our part towards the King, excepting our fear of the Lord, and love to him, and denying wickedness, and loving righteousness, and our love one to another in the bond of peace, *&c.* argue danger in us, which I hope no wise man will either say, or suppose, nor conclude that by reason hereof (to wit) such singularity and correspondency (as aforesaid,) we are a dangerous people, and not to be tollerated.

Lastly, As for our great Meetings, and the supposed danger of seducing more of the Kings Subjects to our wayes, *&c.* I say our Meetings are only for the worship of God, and to wait upon him, and after the example of the Scriptures, and Primitive Christians, and such is our onely end after such a good example, God is our witness, and is no reason of danger towards the King, seeing the end of such our practise is good, and not evil, not to Plot or contrive ought against the King and his Government; But to wait upon the Lord, and to worship him according to the example of Scripture, and as we are perswaded in our hearts by his holy spirit of truth, and we abiding in that way and spirit in the exercise of our pure consciences to God-wards, cannot bring forth evil towards the King, nor effect

any dangerous thing to his perſon or Government; and as for the ſuppoſed danger of ſeducing the Kings Subjects, &c. we are not ſuch as do, or would ſeduce any out of the way of the Lord into error, neither are we hereof yet truly detected or convinced, though ſometimes hereof falſely accuſed; But ſuppoſe many do turn to our way, and become one with us in our Principles and practiſes, (which is the ſuppoſed danger,) this is no reaſon that we are a dangerous people, but rather the contrary; for the more that are turned to us, and become of our principles (and ſo will not fight nor war againſt the King, but doth renounce that principle and practiſe as well as we) the ſafer, and more ſecure is the King and his Government, inaſmuch as the more danger of harm he is in, the more people is of that principle to war againſt him, and the more that are turned from that principle to us, to be a peaceable people, and reſolved alwayes to live in peace with God and our Neighbours, the more ſafe and ſecure is the King; ſo that truly conſidered, though many ſhould turn to us, and to follow our wayes, is no reaſon that we are a dangerous people, but clean the contrary, as is plainly proved.

Secondly, But to make Laws againſt us, and to Perſecute us to Impriſonment, Baniſhment or Death, is not the way of keeping people from turning to us, and this will certainly be found; but the more we are ſought to be ſuppreſſed by ſuch means of Rigour and Violence executed upon us, to Impriſonment, Perſecution and Baniſhment, the more will people incline towards us, to follow our wayes and Principles; For tis common in all Ages,

Ages, that whatsoever people have been persecuted for their Religion and Conscience sake, that people have grown more numerous thereby, and so will it be now; for also there is a property in *English* people to affect sufferers, and to suffer for our Religion, will more encline the hearts of people towards us, then many are now aware, and will decline them from you and your Authority, if it bring forth persecution, *&c.* And hereby will the Lord and all good men be grieved and vexed against you; so to seek to suppress us, and to keep people from following of us, and turning to us by such means of Persecution, is no happy, nor yet blessed and prosperous way for you to proceed in, nor is that any good reason, arguing danger of us, though there be a supposed danger in many following our way.

Thirdly, And suppose that any or many should be so perswaded in their Judgements and Consciences, to turn to our way and follow us, and to dare trust their souls in the following of our Religion, what a hard thing, and how unreasonable will it be, that such should be limited and restrained by force, by Banishment or Death, from that Way and Religion of which they are so perswaded as aforesaid, with which they dare freely trust their souls, seeing the God of Heaven hath reserved in his own power, to work Faith in the Heart, and to convert to Righteousnesse, and to perswade the Consciences and Judgements of men, therefore its proper to him to be Lord and Ruler in this case; And it will be wisdom for the Rulers of this world to Rule well over the outward Man, in the things per-

pertaining to this world, and to permit and allow all people to turn unto, to follow and practise that Religion which they dare trust their own Souls withal, and as they dare give account unto the dreadful God, of what they believe and professe in his dreadful day that will come upon all the World; and let peace be kept among men in their outward conversations, and let every man keep his own peace with God, and look to it as he loves his own Soul, for that ought to be dear to every man, and in all reason and equity every man should have the liberty to profess and practice that Religion which he can trust to for the Salvation of his Soul.

Lastly, Suppose we are not tollerated, but such force put upon us, to the Banishment and Imprisonment of some, and to the causing of others to deny their Religion and Consciences, and conform to the Church, Customs and Fashions of the Land; they that do so conform, will never be such as that you will not have suspition or cause of suspition that they are still dangerous and to be feared by you, yes much more then such as cannot conform, for such who do conform as aforesaid, thorow the force of the Laws, and the fear and terror of this World have renounced (by such conforming) both the Fear of God and good Conscience, and will account themselves an oppressed people by you, and will be always grudging because of such force upon them, & being turned from the principle that now keeps us from fighting and waring against you, they are then at liberty even to rebel against you upon occasion, seeing they have renounced good Conscience,

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science, and conforms contrary to their Judgements thorow your fear, and have forsaken that Principle which now keeps from going to war; all these things being considered, it may justly be concluded, even according to the very Principles of Policy, that the King is more safe by granting a just Toleration, then he can be, if all were conformed by force, contrary to their Consciences.

THE END.